

August 30, 2011

I, Lelia Vaughan, a resident of Jonesville, Texas and a USPS Jonesville Post Office 75659 mail box customer am submitting additional concerns about the procedures utilized by USPS Districts in scheduling and conducting community meetings for the purposes of achieving input from the community at large which could be impacted by post office discontinuance. Jonesville is a small rural community in northeast Texas.

Notification - Community meetings should be scheduled well enough in advance that the greatest possible attendance may be achieved for the purposes of receiving the most representative input, concerns, and comments relative to post office discontinuance and the potential impacts on those served. Opportunities for expression of concerns and comments should be granted to those residents, post office box renters, businesses, and non-resident postal customers who are unable to attend the community meeting.

For the purposes of explanation, some postal patrons who could be impacted should the Jonesville Texas USPS Post Office 75659 be discontinued, did not receive notification of the meeting until only five days prior to the meeting. That is insufficient time to rearrange schedules in order to attend. The USPS should make every attempt to publicly announce such meetings well in advance by using available news media and should send notification letters at least two weeks in advance.

Setting for Community Meeting - Community meetings should be planned well enough in advance to arrange for a meeting place adequate for the potential number of residents involved. Hosting a meeting in a small post office lobby when the number of post office box rentals (reported daily by postal employees) exceeds the building's capacity should not be allowed. Every effort should be made to make post office customers comfortable. Crowded conditions with standing room only for a meeting that lasts an hour or more is unacceptable. If community postal patrons are unable to comfortably fit inside such space, full participation is impossible. Such was the case on August 27, 2011 in Jonesville, Texas when the USPS District Discontinuance Coordinator and Area Manager hosted a meeting in an area insufficient for full participation. At the start of that meeting, fifteen or more post office customers were not able to fit into the post office for the discussion. Some postal patrons left rather than to stay in the extreme heat outside. Temperature at meeting time was 102 degrees. Residents complained about the extreme conditions chosen by USPS officials.

Secondly, hosting a meeting when the outdoor temperatures are expected to be over 100 degrees should give cause for such meeting to be held at a cooler time of the day. District officials were informed of the small lobby and the extreme temperatures at that time of day. Disregard for participant comfort and health is not desirable for any meeting held by the United States Postal Service.

Basis for discontinuance community meeting - United States Postal Service representatives should be very familiar with the community in which such

discontinuance discussions are to be held. The very basis for any recommendation for discontinuance of a post office should be accurate data, complete information based on thorough research, and current information relative to the community served. If the USPS Area Manager and District Manager make recommendations for discontinuance based on inaccurate, incomplete, and incorrect entries on financial statements and post office reports without verifying the truth of such entries, discontinuance recommendations should be immediately reversed in favor of continuance of the community's post office.

As an example, in the Jonesville, Texas 75659 community meeting on August 27, 2011, the Area Manager and District Discontinuance Coordinator were asked if the Jonesville Post Office had experienced a decline in revenue. The Area Manager answered without hesitation, "Yes." Residents had perused the financial statement/report that a resident had requested and which was on display in the post office three days before the meeting. The official document provided by the USPS had contradictory statements about "decline in revenue," "slight increase in revenue," and the ultimate figures which showed a significant increase in revenue over the past three years. How could a USPS Area Manager not know that Jonesville Post Office 75659 had experienced such an increase in revenue. How could the very person, the USPS Area Manager, who recommended discontinuance to the District Manager, not know the facts. Other inconsistencies in the financial statement/report were noted in a previous document entitled **Jonesville TX 75659 concerns 2**.

Proposed solutions for reversal of discontinuance recommendation - When a small rural post office has experienced an increase in revenue during some of the most financially difficult times in the history of the United States Postal Service, that post office should immediately be recommended for continuance rather than discontinuance. Why discontinue a successful revenue producing rural post office? One such post office is in Jonesville, Texas 75659.

Low employee work load can be improved with reduction of hours of operation and elimination of Saturday delivery. This option would enable rural residents to get their mail at a secure and safe post office on a daily basis five days a week. Reduced hours of operation would help lower expenses for wages earned by postal employees, especially in small rural post offices which do not have a professional postmaster who also receives benefits in addition to salary.

Small rural post offices which have received offers of significant reduction of lease rental fees and which offices also have shown increased revenues, should be continued immediately to avoid negative impacts on the community served. Documented increase in revenue, reduction of hours of operation, and acceptance of offers to reduce lease rental fees can help the United States Postal Service. If such small rural post office begin to suffer declines in revenue, post office box rental fees could be increased.

The recommendation to discontinue a successful rural post office for reasons which have simple and practical solutions should be reversed immediately. Doing so would

prevent impacts on the community, its residents, its businesses, its non-profit organizations and foundations, and its post office customers. If Area Managers and District Managers cannot truthfully substantiate how discontinuance of a small rural post office can achieve reduction of USPS losses, such post offices should be immediately continued. A small rural post office which is known to have increased revenues should not have been recommended for discontinuance. The USPS Jonesville, Texas Post Office 75659 is one such post office which should be immediately recommended for continuance without further delays or negative impacts on the Jonesville community. Considerations for the discontinuance of community post offices which have achieved increases in revenue takes time, is stressful on the postal service employees and the patrons served, and is wasteful of energies which should be focused on more pertinent issues such as post offices in serious decline, USPS employees who do not perform work tasks, and USPS supervisors, managers, and officials who sign their names on recommendations based on fictional, incomplete, inaccurate, and inappropriate entries on the financial statement/report for post offices under consideration for discontinuance.

The United States Postal Service must not allow discontinuance based on fiction.

The United States Postal Service must acknowledge, protect, and preserve small rural post offices which show strength of service, which show potential for self-sustainability, which are supported by the community served, and which are needed to maintain community identity.

The United States Postal Service must hold its management accountable for erroneous mistakes which bear serious consequences on communities and which result in hours of unnecessary stress on postal employees and patrons in those small rural post offices subjected to such unsubstantiated ridicule.

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